UNDERSTANDING THE PREVALENCE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF BIAS CRIME IN MASSACHUSETTS HIGH SCHOOLS

FINAL REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The main objectives of this study are providing empirically based estimates of the prevalence of bias and hate-motivated crime in Massachusetts' secondary schools, and estimating the rate that these incidents are reported to the police, school officials, and others. In an effort to understand how reporting rates can be improved, we examine why some victims chose not to report. We also assess how certain individual traits are associated with victimization. This information is intended to assist education and criminal justice professionals in planning programs and policies aimed at prevention, assisting victims, increasing the level of reporting to police and school officials, and providing baseline data for future assessments of school hate crime trends.

BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (1999) defines hate or bias crimes as follows:

> A hate crime, also known as a bias crime, is a criminal offense committed against a person, property, or society which is motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender's bias against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity/national origin.

In Massachusetts, the Governor's Task Force on Hate Crime (1997) provides a definition very similar to the FBI's, except that it adds gender to the list of individual traits for which victims are targeted:

> A crime in which the perpetrator's conduct was motivated, in whole or in part, by hatred, bias, or prejudice, based on the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of another group or individual.

Bias crimes include the full range of criminal behavior, but the key element in distinguishing such events from non-bias crime is the motivation of the offender. Crimes motivated by hate or bias present unique and complex problems beyond those presented by crimes with other motivations. For example, a recent national survey found that the law enforcement personnel who deal with reported crime and with crime victims most frequently - the police - generally believe that hate motivated crimes are more serious than similar crimes that are not motivated by hate or bias (McDevitt, Balboni, and Bennett, 2000). In addition, the Supreme Court tacitly acknowledged their unique pernicious impact on the community by noting the "...distinct emotional harm" exacted by the commission of such crimes (Wisconsin v. Mitchell, 1993). Also noting the potential to "..incit[e] community unrest," the Court acknowledged the strong emotions which such crimes often elicit from community members. The Oregon Court of Appeals refers to this attribute of bias crime as the power to "escalate from individual conflicts to mass disturbances" (Harvard Law Review, 1996).

Considering the seriousness of hate and bias crimes, it is unfortunate that we lack sound data addressing some of the most basic questions about it, such as its prevalence, what proportion goes unreported, and trends over time. While some reports indicate that bias crime is increasing (Kelley, 1991), others argue that hate crimes have maintained a ubiquitous presence in American society throughout its history. The primary source of national data on hate crime (the Uniform Crime Reports, or UCR) shows no increase in the number of crimes reported to police over the past decade (McDevitt, Balboni, and Bennett, 2000).

The various views on the prevalence of hate crime have yet to be reconciled for a variety or reasons. To create more organized, national reporting procedures, in 1990 President Bush signed

into law the Hate Crime Statistics Act (HCSA), mandating the Attorney General to collect and report data on hate crimes to the Uniform Crime Reporting Program of the FBI (U.S. Congress, 1990). However, widespread compliance with the terms specified in HCSA has yet to occur. Just half of police jurisdictions are complying with the directives of HCSA, and only sixteen to nineteen percent have recorded a hate crime occurrence in the last five years (Nolan and Akiyama, 1999). It is nearly certain that the prevalence and incidence of hate crimes is significantly underestimated by most agencies through the UCR (McDevitt et al., 2000).

In addition to inadequate agency compliance, underreporting by victims and witnesses also appears to be a serious obstacle to developing quality data on hate crime. For many reasons, victims are often unwilling to report. For example, some know that they are victims of vandalism, but may be unaware that bias or hatred motivated the offender. Others may be aware, but are afraid to report incidents to police due to fear of retaliation, fear it may not be taken seriously, or a belief that the police may not be able to do anything about it.

In studies completed by The Prejudice Institute in Maryland, only one-third of victims reported notifying the police about the incident (Ehrlich, Larcom, and Purvis, 1994). Several studies have attempted to better document the incidence and prevalence of hate crime by using data from advocacy groups. The Report on Anti-Gay/Lesbian Violence in the United States (1995) estimated that for every anti-gay or lesbian crime reported to the police, 4.67 are identified by community agencies. Other studies speculate that the proportion reported is even lower; one survey completed in 1990 suggested that only thirteen percent of gay victims actually report the offense to law enforcement officials (Goldberg and Hanson, 1994). These and other studies question the

validity of current UCR statistics on hate crimes, hindering accurate estimation of prevalence, incidence, and trends.

The extent of hate crime in high school settings is even more difficult to ascertain. There are current research efforts designed to address school bias victimization rates, but at this time there is little available data. For example, the School Crime Supplement of the 1999 National Crime Victimization Survey included (for the first time) questions on hate language and graffiti. As reported in the 2000 Annual Report on School Safety (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, 2000), the NCVS survey found that 13 percent of students had been called a hate-related word or name, and that 36 percent had seen hate-related graffiti at school. The school safety report also notes that questions about hate crime have been added recently to other nationwide surveys, but that data gathered using these questions are not currently available.

Research on youthful offenders and victims provides reasons to believe that bias crime may be a significant problem for high school students. In Massachusetts, for example, 31 percent of the victims are less than 21 years old and 60 percent of the offenders are under 21 years of age (Governor's Task Force on Hate Crimes, 1998). Given the well-known tendency for youths to significantly underreport crime occurring at school (often accepting it as an inevitable part of school life, or declining to report it due to fear of retaliation being labeled a "snitch"), one would expect a relatively small percentage of bias offenses to be reported to police or school officials. While one can speculate about underreporting, the true extent of this problem is unknown due to a lack of research in this area.

In June of 1999, the Massachusetts Governor's Task Force on Hate Crime invited

researchers to submit proposals for a study examining high school bias crime and reporting. The grant for this study was awarded to the Center for Criminal Justice Policy Research (CCJPR) at Northeastern University's College of Criminal Justice. Data were collected from students enrolled in public high schools throughout the Commonwealth in the Spring of 2000. The method of data collection is described in the next section of this report. Subsequently, we present our analysis and interpretation of the data, and in the final section we present recommendations based upon our study.

RESEARCH METHOD

QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey instrument contained questions examining four main types of issues: student characteristics, crime victimization, reporting of crime, and students' attitudes and perceptions of school climate. The initial series of questions asked students to provide demographic and personal information such as their race, gender, religion, class year, and sexual orientation. The second section included questions about crime victimization, perceived motivations of offenders, and crime reporting. Finally, students were asked several questions about to their perception of their school's atmosphere and their personal feelings about diversity, tolerance, and harassment. A copy of the questionnaire is presented in Appendix A.

The instructions at the beginning of the questionnaire stressed that students were to think about crimes occurring <u>at school</u> only. We defined "at school" as "on school grounds during schools hours, and at school-sponsored events such as dances, sports, and music events." In these

instructions, we also stressed the importance of providing complete and honest information, and assured students that their responses would remain anonymous.

Victimization

To measure the extent of crime victimization (bias and other types) we asked several questions modeled after those used in the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1997). The format of the victimization section of the survey included questions regarding whether the individual had experienced a certain type of crime in the past six month while at school. If they responded "no," they were instructed to go to the next page of the questionnaire which addressed a different type of crime. If they responded affirmatively, they were asked several follow-up questions about the offense.

Students were asked about six types of offenses: vandalism, assault, assault and battery, theft, sexual assault/harassment, or other forms of harassment. These offenses represent the most common bias motivated crimes as cited in the literature. For example, the question addressing vandalism was: “During the past six months at school, did anyone intentionally destroy or damage your property (such as your books, locker, bag, car)?” For each of the offense types, students indicating that they had been victimized were then asked: (1) the number of times the particular type of crime had occurred, (2) a brief description of the most serious incident, (3) their perception of the reasons they had been targeted by the offender(s), (4) to whom they reported the incident, and, if they chose not to report, (5) reasons for not reporting.

Perceived Motivation of Offender

To make the distinction between bias crimes and those with other motivations, we asked students who said they had been victimized why they thought they were targeted by the offender. Students were asked to list the three most important reasons that the offender(s) targeted them. Those surveyed were presented with a list of 16 different kinds of reasons (see Appendix A), including several outside the boundaries of bias crime: class year, income, friends, bad luck, the offender not liking or being angry with the victim, the offender being older and bigger, and "don't know, it just happened." We considered offenses to be motivated by hate or bias when victims indicated that the offender was driven by any one of the following reasons: gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, first language, and national origin.

When examining the percentages of students indicating that they believed crimes were motivated by biases toward various individual traits, it is important to keep in mind that the percentages do not total 100 because students could identify more than one bias motivation for each offense type or different motivations for multiple offense types. For instance, a student could be the victim of a racially motivated vandalism and the victim of harassment because of his or her religion.

An important limitation of estimating bias crime rates through victimization surveys is that we must rely solely on the victim's perception of motivation. Clearly, there is room for error. For example, it is possible that victims may sometimes attribute assaults to hate or bias since the offenders were of a different race than themselves. In such instances it is certainly reasonable to speculate that racial bias may have been the sole or a contributing factor, but it is also possible that the victim was in the wrong place at the wrong time, and the offenders would have been just as likely to victimize the next available target regardless of race. While this kind of error in perception would lead to inflated estimates, other perceptual errors could lead to underestimates. For

example, it is possible that a particular offense was motivated my hate, but that without an overt expression of such motivation it could easily be undetected by the victim.

Clearly, errors in perceptions of offender motivation could push hate crime estimates in either direction. Without an empirically grounded understanding of how crime victims make inferences about the motivation of the offenders, we can only speculate about how possible errors in victims' perceptions affect estimates based on victimization survey data. In the absence of such information, one might reasonably speculate that overall, the sources of error in victim perceptions that would lead to over-estimating and those leading to under-estimating may more or less cancel each other out, or perhaps lead to slight underestimates.

Regardless of what (if any) bias is introduced by victimization surveys, the fact remains that at this point they are probably the most reliable source of hate crime rate data. Certainly, victim surveys are far more likely to produce valid estimates than the primary alternative method, which is relying on records of crime reported to police through the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) or National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Given the evidence of the reluctance of victims to report hate crime to the police, and the well-documented shortcoming in the official reporting and data collection processes of law enforcement agencies (McDevitt, Balboni, and Bennett, 2000), rates based on the UCR and NIBRS almost certainly underestimate the true prevalence of such crimes.

In the remainder of this report we use the terms "hate crime" and "bias crime" to refer to certain offenses committed against students. For larceny, destruction of property, assault and battery, and assault, there should be little question that the word "crime" can be accurately applied. However, the question about harassment refers to a rather broad range of events. While some

forms of harassment are quite serious and clearly criminal, it is possible that some instances reported by students (such as being called a name or having one's books knocked out of one's hands), while perhaps highly annoying, would be unlikely to be considered criminal offenses regardless of motivation. Conversely, through bravado, denial, or memory lapses, some students probably fail to report serious forms of harassment that would certainly be categorized as crimes. Rather than try to distinguish serious from less serious events in the absence of information necessary to make this distinction, we have simply assumed that all of the events reported as harassment were serious. While some instances of harassment and other offenses may not have been crimes, we have elected to use the term "crime" in reference to all of the six offense types to make the presentation less awkward.

Some of the responses to the open-ended questions asking students to describe incidents of victimization sheds some light on the issue of the range of seriousness encountered in the bias crimes revealed by the students in our sample. For example, the following were among the responses (Note: All of the responses were contributed by bias crime victims only):

Vandalism:

"People wrote Fag on my back."

"Had holes poked in my shirt and a paper cross taped to my back."

"I was burned with a hot glue gun and my art project was demolished."

"My car was set on fire."

"He wrote obscene words on my desk."

Assault and Battery:

"People kicked me in the head."

"People tried to push me down because I'm bisexual."

"I was beat up badly"

"Five or more people, no relationship, hit in face with fist, thrown to ground, and kicked."

"Pushed me up against a locker, started to touch me."

Assault:

"He threatened to shoot me."

"Just random people threaten to kill me, call me a faggot."

"Someone said they were gonna kick my ass."

"I was threatened with scissors during activity mod."

Theft:

"A girl stole my gold necklace given to me by my boyfriend."

"Somebody stole my lunch money in science class. It was only $3.00, but it was mean. They were boys in my class."

"Twenty dollars was stolen from me at practice."

Sexual Harassment:

"Someone grabbed my butt and then grabbed my breasts and called me baby."

"In the hall up against my locker he grabbed my chest."

"Grabbed my buttocks in the hallway."

"Forced kissing and pinched my breast or butt."

"One of my friends is constantly grabbing my ass and breasts even though I tell him to

stop."

"Touching my legs and making sexual comments."

Harassment:

"Four people called me a dike because I cut my hair short."

"A student told my mother in the parking lot right after school, 'Do you know your daughter is a dyke?'"

"Being made fun of due to my size."

"Everyone calls me a dyke, lesbian, every name in the book."

"I have been called slut, whore, bitch."

"My ex-boyfriend told me I was a f..... dyke and that he was gonna beat the shit out of me."

"People call me whore or slut, ugly, nasty, I have a nice rack or nice body. They even throw things at me."

"Three or four people who don't know me called me a fag."

"Six people kicked me out of the locker room and called me a dyke, so now I change in the bathroom."

Reporting Crime to Police, School Officials, and Others

Students who indicated victimization were asked whether they told anyone about it, and if so, who. A list of twelve categories of individuals or other avenues of reporting were listed (e.g., police, family, friends, clergy, health professionals, suicide hotline, psychological counselor or therapist, high school personnel such as a teacher, a counselor, security personnel, or other

employee, their boyfriend or girlfriend, or a social service worker (See Appendix A). Since it is likely that some individuals may tell several different people, respondents were instructed to check or list all that applied. We also provided a space for them to list others to whom they reported the incident, and another space for them to indicate that they told no one. Students indicating that they had been victimized but did not report the crime to anyone were asked why, and were provided with a space to explain. Finally, students who indicated that they had told school employees were asked to describe how these individuals responded.

SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION

In March of 2000, the Center for Criminal Justice Policy Research (CCJPR) at Northeastern University contacted, by letter, nearly all of the more than 300 public high schools in Massachusetts to solicit participation in a study of hate crime prevalence and reporting. Using school-level data from the Massachusetts Department of Education, we excluded a small number of schools having very low enrollments.

Our sample involves two levels: schools, and students within schools. Initially, 60 high schools agreed to participate. We were able to arrange the administration of student victimization surveys at 40 of these schools, and obtained completed surveys from 30 schools.

The key criterion by which a sampling method is determined to be successful is how well it represents the population from which it is drawn. While random selection is usually the most desirable, it is sometimes (as in this case) impractical. Given the variety of demands beyond classroom instruction placed upon public schools (such as other surveys and the administration of the MCAS test), as well as policies limiting outside researchers' access to students, many schools

were unable to participate in the study. While our strategy of using all schools agreeing to participate may be argued to introduce self-selection biases, we believe that a greater threat to representativeness would be posed by having so few schools that all of the various regions, geographic and economic conditions, and levels of racial and ethnic diversity found throughout the commonwealth would not be represented. Given this, we chose to make use of all of schools agreeing to participate in the study. Random sampling of schools would have reduced the number schools in our sample.

Data Collection Process

We had initially planned to send teams of researchers to each school to administer the survey, but personnel from most of the participating schools expressed a preference for administering the survey themselves. The primary reason given was that it allowed them some flexibility in the timing of the data collection, and this allowed them to schedule particular classes when it was least disruptive.

Questionnaires were sent to schools during April 2000 and were returned by the end of the following June. With the exception of two schools (one that was targeted for intensive study and received 1000 questionnaires, and another that agreed to survey only 40 students), 200 questionnaires were sent to each participating school. Of the 6640 questionnaires sent, we received useable responses from 4509 students, for an average of just over 150 students per school.

As we discussed in the sampling of schools, random sampling of students within schools is often ideal for assuring that the sample represents the population (i.e., the sample of students representing all public high school students in the state). For our study, resource limitations and

other considerations made this method impractical. Mailing questionnaires to several thousand individually selected students was not an option our budget would allow. Reducing our sample size was an undesirable option, since all available information suggested that hate crime victimization would be experienced by a relatively small percentage of students. In order to address two of our primary research objectives - developing a profile of hate crime victims, and estimating the rate at which victims report such crimes to police and/or schools officials - we needed a sample of students large enough to ensure a reasonable number of victims would be sampled. For example, if we assumed that hate crime victimization would be experienced by five percent of the population, we would require a sample of 5000 students in order to find 250 victims. In order to develop a risk profile for victimization, we needed to ensure we would have sufficient numbers of victims to subdivide them across categories or race, religion, etc.

Randomly selecting each student and administering the survey at school would mean that the process of locating and administering the survey to each would take a great deal of time and require the cooperation of most, if not all, of the teachers in each school. Random selection would typically result in fairly even distribution across class years, as well as across courses held at any time in a given day. Finding one or a few students within each of many different classes would require contacting numerous teachers, and asking them to disrupt their courses and schedule the survey's administration. If the survey were to be completed during class, the only way to avoid penalizing selected students would be for the teacher to suspend class activities for all students until those sampled completed their questionnaires.

To balance such concerns, we adopted the following method: At each school a contact person was identified. This person received the questionnaires and was responsible for their

administration and return to the CCJPR. We asked that each school distribute the questionnaires to at least two classes from each grade level, and to try to distribute them as evenly as possible across grades. We also requested that teachers read the survey instructions aloud to the students prior to the start of the survey. Teachers were also made aware that victimization surveys sometimes require that respondents recall harmful experiences in their life. To help alleviate any possible harm resulting from students recalling these experiences, we suggested that school officials attend to any concerns or problems a student might have after the completion of the survey. We also provided to the schools a list of victim service groups for students (or, teachers on behalf of students) to contact if necessary.

RESULTS

ASSESSING THE REPRESENTATIVENESS OF SCHOOLS SAMPLED

Our sampling and data collection strategies appear to have been successful in yielding samples of schools and students comparable to the populations from which they were drawn. The major omission in our sample is the city of Boston. We had been informed that Boston schools rarely participate in surveys by outside researchers due to exceptionally high rates of requests by researchers, and in an effort to focus their resources on their primary mission of education. We twice mailed requests to each of the public high schools in the city, but were unable to gain access.

While the omission of Boston limits the extent to which our results represent the population of high schools in the Commonwealth, we were nevertheless able to obtain a diverse sample of schools and students that otherwise appears representative. For example, every region of the

Commonwealth is accounted for: Western and Central Massachusetts, the North and South Shore, Cape Cod, and the suburban Boston Area. A list of participating schools is presented in Table 1, and a map indicating the location of these schools is presented in Figure 1.

In addition to regional representation, indicators of community type, size and economic factors suggest that our sample of schools is comparable to the state. The schools were drawn from every community type (as defined by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue): Nine were categorized as urbanized center communities, six were economically developed suburbs, five were growth communities, two were residential suburbs, six were rural economic center communities, one was a small rural community, and one was defined as a resort/retirement/artistic community.

Another point on which to compare the representativeness of the sample is the size of the communities in the which the schools are located (see Table 2). The potential would certainly exist for biases in our findings if, for example, we systematically over-sampled either larger or smaller communities. In attempting to compare the population size of the communities present in our sample and those statewide we can only focus on those communities with local school districts because regional school districts draw students from a number of different, often less populous, communities. Of the 30 schools sampled, 18 contained local high schools and the other 12 had regional high schools drawing from several adjacent communities. Of the 18 municipalities in our sample with local high schools, the mean population was 28,243. Statewide, the mean population of municipalities with local high schools was 26,924, which falls within the sample's 95 percent confidence interval.

Available economic indicators again suggest that our sample of schools is highly representative of those throughout the state (Table 2). The most recent data (1989) on per capita

income for the municipalities in the sample was $16,507 versus $18,311 for all of the communities in the state. Median per capita income was similar as well ($16,443 for the sample and $17,163 for the state).

Other points of comparison also suggest representativeness (Table 2). For example, our sample of 30 schools included eight vocational/technical high schools. Similarities existed between the state-wide and the sample schools' attendance rates (93.9 percent for the state vs. 92.5 percent for the sample), drop out rates (3.4 percent vs. 2.9 percent), percentage of students planning to go to college (four year: 53.2 percent vs. 44.7 percent; two year: 18.6 percent vs. 22.8 percent), and those panning to go to work after high school (16.2 percent vs. 23.1 percent). The 1997-98 mean per-pupil expenditures for all day programs is nearly identical for the school sample ($6,824) and the state ($6,361) (the state mean falls within the 95 percent confidence interval for the sample). While no non-random sample can ever be completely representative we believe this sample does represent the total population of schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

ASSESSING THE REPRESENTATIVENESS OF STUDENTS SAMPLED

Just as it is important for the sample of schools to sufficiently represent the range of schools throughout the state, it is important to determine whether the students selected from those schools represent the state-wide population of students. The racial and ethnic composition of our sample is comparable to that of the state-wide population of high school students (Table 3). Our sample was 85.3 percent white (n=3812 out of 4469 who reported their race), 1.3 percent (n=58) African American, 1.8 percent (n=82) Asian, 9.4 percent (n=422) Hispanic, and a combined 2.1 percent (n=95) Native American, "other," or multi-racial. The state's public high school population is slightly

more diverse, with 77.1 percent white, 8.6 percent African American, 4.2 percent Asian, 10.0 percent Hispanic, and .2 percent Native American. The greatest disparity between our sample and the population is that our sample contains a smaller percentage of African-Americans and Asians and a greater percentage of whites. This disparity is probably the result of not having Boston schools represented in the sample.

The most likely implication of this disparity is that we may underestimate the overall victimization rate. Minorities in general have higher hate crime victimization rates, and we found this to be true of those in our sample. Assuming that this holds true for the statewide population of high school students, under-representing minorities in our sample may cause our estimated victimization rates to be somewhat suppressed.

A profile of our sample's demographic traits is presented in Table 4. Gender is fairly evenly distributed, with males making up 47.9 percent (n=2154) of the sample and females constituting 52.1 percent (n=2341). The distribution of our sample across class years is also equivalent to the population, except for a modest under-representation of seniors: 32 percent (n=1436) of the sample were freshmen, 29.9 percent (n=1344) were sophomores, 24.5 percent (n=1099) were juniors, and 13.7 percent (n=615) of the sample were seniors. The relative shortage of seniors in the sample is partially the result of surveying near the end of the school year (which was necessary to ensure at least a six-month reference period of school attendance preceding the survey), where seniors in some schools finish earlier to prepare for graduation. It is also partially due to natural attrition in the last two years of high school.

The vast majority of the student in the sample described themselves as heterosexual (96.4 percent, n=4197), and a small percentage indicated that they were homosexual (1.1 percent, n=48)

or bisexual (2.5 percent, n=110).

By a wide margin, the most common religious affiliation in the sample was Catholic (60.4 percent, or 2602 of the 4307 students who responded to the religion question). The next most common religion was Protestant, constituting 17.7 percent (n=762) of the sample, followed by Atheist, Agnostic, or no religion (collectively, 10.4 percent, n=450), "other" religions such as pagan (4.5 percent, n=192), and unspecified Christian (2.8 percent, n=120). Less than two percent of the students in the sample were Jewish (1.8 percent, n=77), religions prevalent in the East and Mid-East such as Muslim and Hindu (1.4 percent, n=59), and Eastern Orthodox (1 percent, n=45).

Most of the students in the sample indicated that the primary language spoken in their home was English (90.3 percent, n=4059), followed by Spanish (5.4 percent, n=242) and 'other' (4.3 percent, n=194). The most common "other" language was Portuguese.

A small number of students (5.5 percent, n=244) indicated that they possessed a disability of some kind. When asked to indicate the nature of their disability, most specified some form of learning disability, such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). It may be that our sample slightly under-represents the proportion of students with disabilities. We could not provide for the survey to be specially administrated to disabled students, such as those with severe learning disabilities. If our sample has under-represented students with disabilities, and they are more frequently the targets of bias offenses, our overall victimization rate may be slightly suppressed.

A NOTE ABOUT MISSING DATA

Most research involves making decisions about how to handle missing data, and this study is

no different. As mentioned above, we distributed 6,640 questionnaires, and received "useable" responses on 4,509. By "useable" we mean that there is enough information provided on the questionnaires that they are of value in pursuing at least one of the objectives of the study, not that every question was answered on each questionnaire. For example, there were 53 questionnaires with demographic information and responses to the questions about school atmosphere regarding diversity and harassment. This information is worth retaining. However, these surveys contained no responses to the questions about the six major types of crime victimization. Thus, when calculating the crime and bias crime victimization rates, the base number is 4456 students who responded to the victimization questions, and not the total of 4509 useable surveys received.

Similarly, the number of individuals providing responses to the questions about demographic traits fluctuated between 4309 and 4497 (see Table 4). In most cases, students filled out all or the vast majority of questions on the questionnaire, but skipped no more than one or two of the demographic traits.

Four questionnaires contained responses to the questions asking whether students had experienced different types of crime, but there were no responses to questions about the perceived motivations of the offenders. We have no reason to doubt the validity of the responses indicating that they had been victimized, and we do not want to discard this important information. Thus, these questionnaires were included in the sample. However, the data that was missing on these questionnaires makes it impossible to categorize the offenses against these four students as either bias crimes or non-bias crimes. Therefore, these four students are excluded in the calculation of bias crime and non-bias crime victimization.

Table 5 presents a summary of the number of students responding to the survey, and the

number responding to the major victimization questions. As can be seen here, there were a total of 1692 students who indicated they had been crime victims. One thousand, three hundred and forty-four students indicated non-bias victimization, and 344 indicated bias victimization. An additional four student indicated victimization of at least one of the types of crime, but did not provide enough information to allow them to be categorized as either bias crime or non-bias crime victims.

ANALYZING BIAS CRIME VICTIMIZATION

To be classified as a hate crime victim a student must: (1) identify that they were the victim of at least one of the offenses specified, and (2) indicate that the offender in at least one of these incidents targeted them because of their gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, nationality or first language. Based on this definition, ***we found that 7.7 percent (n=344) of the sample was the victim of a hate- or bias-motivated crime at school within the six months prior to the survey*** (Figure 2). As a point of comparison, we found that more than one third (38 percent, n=1692) of the students surveyed indicated that they were the victim of at least one of the types of offenses examined in the six months preceding the survey. About one in five (20.4 percent, n=344 of the 1688 students who were crime victims and provided information about the motivations of the offenders) of the victims of crime believed that they were targeted because of bias against one of their personal characteristics. Extrapolating the bias crime rate observed in our sample to the total public high school population of 265,174 students, we estimate that in a six-month period approximately 20,400 students may be victims of hate motivated crime occurring at school in Massachusetts.

Comparing Bias Crime Rates Across Schools

There was considerable variation among high schools in hate crime rates. As can be seen in Table 6, hate crime rates ranged from 4.0 to 14.1 percent across schools, with a fairly even distribution throughout this range. This table also presents the rates of non-bias crime and all crime, as well as the percent of all crimes that were bias motivated within schools. (Note that we have replaced school names with a numeric code to honor our agreement that the hate crime rates associated with each school would be kept confidential.)

With this range of bias crime, it begs the question of why there is so much variation across schools. Obviously, there are many different kinds of forces at work that produce a hate crime rate within any particular school, and there are at least three distinct levels of analysis that are necessary to explain cross-school variations: the individual (student) level, the school level, and the community level. For example, the demographic characteristics of the student body, per-pupil expenditures and hate crime prevention programs within schools, and community crime rates and economic factors (e.g., median income, unemployment rates, etc.) all may affect hate crime within schools. In addition, these factors all can have complex interactions. For example, community unemployment rates and the demographic profiles of schools may each produce independent effects on school hate crime, but they may also interact to produce other effects.

While unraveling such complex interactions is beyond the scope and resources of this study, we examined the bivariate correlations between school hate crime rates several school and community level variables. The correlations between school bias crime rates and several of the more relevant school characteristics (school level independent variables) are presented in Table 7.

We partitioned the bias crime rate into two broad 'kinds' of bias crime: 'race/ethnic motivated bias crime'[1] and all other forms of bias crime (gender, religion, sexual orientation bias crime). This was done for two reasons. First, some of the independent variables, such as the demographic composition, that are often used to explain variation between different places (in this case schools) do not apply to other types of bias motivation. For example, one would not expect to see any difference in anti-homosexual bias crimes because of the racial composition of a school. Secondly, as Table 7 shows none of the school characteristics are significantly related to non-racial/ethnic bias crime. In other words, there was no observable relationship between any of the school characteristics and the level of non-racial/ethnic motivated bias crime within a school.

For those unfamiliar with correlation statistics, zero represents no relationship of any kind between the two variables, and one represents a perfect positive relationship indicating that as the value of one variable increases, so does the value of the other at completely predictable intervals. Values between zero and one indicate levels between these extremes; e.g., .50 indicates a positive relationship of moderate strength, and .85 would indicate a very strong positive relationship. Correlation coefficients with negative signs ranging between zero and negative one have the same meaning in terms of the strength of relationship, but the negative sign denotes that as the values of one variable increase, the values of the other variable decrease.

As shown in Table 7, we found that three school characteristic variables had strong positive relationships with the level racial/ethnicity motivated bias victimization in a school. Specifically, recent increases in the relative minority student population (r = .78), the proportion of the student body eligible for free lunch (r = .78) and the percentage size of current minority population (r = .72)

[1] Racial/ethnic bias victimization includes the categories race, ethnicity, first language, and national origin.

all had strong positive relationships to the dependent variable. That is, a high proportion of students eligible for free lunch, for instance, is associated with a high level of racial/ethnic motivated bias victimization within a school. Other variables measuring educational characteristics of schools, such as percent of students planning attend four year colleges (r = -.64), were also correlated, but to a lesser degree and in the opposite direction. Thus, as a higher rate of students going on to four-year schools is related to a lower rate of race/ethnicity motivated bias crime. Policy implications of this finding are discussed later.

Bias Victimization by Crime Type

Of the 344 bias crime victims in this study, most (58.1 percent, n=200) were victims of harassment (Figure 3). About one in four (23 percent, n=79) of the hate crime victims experienced sexual assault/harassment. Vandalism victims comprised 15.4 percent (n=53) of the bias offense victims, followed by assault (14.2 percent, n=49), assault and battery (12.5 percent, n=43), and larceny (11.6 percent, n=40) victims. Note that the percentages do not total 100 percent because students could be victims of more than one bias crime type.

Bias Crimes Attributed to Various Types of Motivation

As we discussed at the beginning of this report, there are a variety of different types of bias crime motivation. According to the FBI's definition, offenders choosing their victims on the basis of their "race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity/national origin" are considered to be motivated by hate or bias. The Massachusetts Governor's Task Force on Hate Crimes adds gender to this list. Our questionnaire listed 16 different reasons for which victims may have been targeted, and this list in intended to cover both the FBI's and the Massachusetts Governor's Task Force on

Hate Crimes lists of victims traits. We provided separate items in the questionnaire to cover gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, and disabilities. We listed three traits intended to make sure that we addressed several dimensions of "ethnicity:" first language and national origin were provided as response options in addition to ethnicity. In the analyses that follow, we collapsed first language, national origin, and ethnicity into one category labeled "ethnicity."

Figure 4 presents a comparison of the percentages of the bias crime victims who believe they were targeted on the basis of each of the traits associated with bias crimes. In reviewing these statistics, it is important to note that one should not infer the individual traits of victims from victim's perceptions of the motivations of offenders. For example, one should not assume that the victims of crimes targeting sexual orientation are bisexual or homosexual. With that caveat, this data does indicate that gay, lesbian and bisexual students were much more likely to be targets of bias crime than their "straight" classmates. In fact, while a far higher percentage of gay and bisexual students (19.6 percent, combined) were victims of crimes which they believe were targeted toward their sexual orientation than were heterosexual students (1.9 percent), more than half (61.3 percent) of the total number of victims of bias crime targeting sexual orientation were heterosexual.

Some heterosexual students believe that they were targeted because of their sexual orientation, and some white students believe they were targeted because of their race. So, when reviewing the proportion of students victimized by bias offenses targeting each individual trait, it is important to keep in mind that not all victims of racially motivated crime are in racial minorities, not all victims of bias offenses targeting their sexual orientation are homosexual or bisexual, etc.

According to our data, bias offenders were most often motivated to select their victims by their perception of the victims' sexual orientation. Specifically, 37.2% the sample of bias victims

believe they were targeted due to their sexual orientation (n=128), The next most common bias motivation was gender with approximately one in four of the bias victims (27 percent, n=92) believing that they were selected on the basis of their gender. A similar percentage reported that they were targeted because of their race (25% n=86) here groups were followed by bias victims targeted because of their ethnicity (20.6 percent, n=71), religion (16.6 percent, n=57), and disabilities (6.1 percent, n=21).

Many students identify more than one type of motivation for their victimization, such bias against their ethnicity and race. Multiple bias motivations could be either a student indicating more than one motivation for the same offense or different motivations for more than one offense. Close to three in ten bias victims indicated more than one type of bias motivation (28.5 percent, n=98), with 20.1 percent of bias victims (n=69) perceiving two different bias motivations, and 8.5 percent (n=29) of bias victims identifying three or four different motivations. Many of these dual motivations are the result of student marking two or more correlated characteristics, such as race and ethnicity or nationality and first language. Take for instance a Hispanic student who perceives his victimization to be against some quality associated with being Hispanic. This could include his race, ethnicity, first language, or nationality. As such, he may check more than one characteristic.

Individual Traits and Bias Crime Victimization

Several individual traits were found to significantly affect bias crime rates. Substantial differences in the percentage of students experiencing bias offenses were seen across all of the traits defining bias crime: race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, and disability.

The data presented here shows how bias crime victimization rates vary among students with different individual traits. This does not necessarily mean that a student was targeted because of the particular characteristic used to categorize and compare them. For example, a disabled student may believe that they were targeted for a hate crime because of their disability, but may have been targeted due to their being Jewish. Similarly, an African-American student may have been targeted due to the offenders perception that the student was homosexual. In such instances the victim would appear in our data in both categories of individual traits (e.g., disable and Jewish, or African-American and homosexual) who were hate crime victims, yet only one the traits was the cause of their victimization. Nevertheless, the comparisons do indicate that some students (mostly females or people possessing traits placing them in the statistical minority) are victimized more frequently than males and majority groups, such as whites, heterosexuals, and (in this state) Catholics.

Race

Race was strongly associated with bias crime victimization risk (Figure 5). Those in minority groups (all non-white's combined) had nearly twice the bias victimization rate of whites (12.1 percent versus 6.9 percent). Examining the major racial groups separately, students of Native-American heritage had the highest bias victimization rate (28 percent), four times the rate for white students. African-American students had more than twice the hate victimization rate (19.3 percent) of white students, followed by Asian/Pacific Islanders (17.1 percent), Latinos (9.2 percent), and other races (7.7 percent).

Ethnicity

Students identifying their ethnicity as Hispanic had somewhat higher rates of bias

victimization (9 percent) than non-Hispanic students (7.6 percent).

Nationality

The questionnaire asked students to identify their nationality, and provided a space for them to write their response. We divided the hundreds of distinct responses into eight major categories: American, African (including Cape Verdian), Latin/Hispanic (Central and South America, plus Spain and Portugal), European (includes both Eastern and Western Europe), Asian, United Kingdom, multinational (students who responded that their nationality was a combination of any two of the other categories, such as "Italian and Irish"- which mixes the European and United Kingdom categories in our groupings), and other (includes Australian and Middle-Eastern nations, which were indicated by very few students in our sample). The breakdown of the sample across categories is presented in Table 4.

Figure 7 presents the proportion of students in each category of nationality who report experiencing bias crime. As can be seen here, people describing their nationality as African experience a higher rate of bias victimization (24.3 percent) than students of other nationalities. Asians (18.1 percent) and students of "other" nationalities (15.4 percent) also experienced relatively high bias crime rates. Students identifying their nationality as the United Kingdom have the lowest bias crime rates (5.8 percent), which was the only nationality with lower bias victimization rates than students saying their nationality is American.

Language

Students indicating that English was not their first language had a higher bias crime victimization rate than students identifying English as their first language (11.3 percent versus 7.4

percent; see Figure 8). Similarly, students indicating that the language spoken most often in their homes was Spanish or another language were more likely to be bias crime victims (8.5 and 16.3 percent, respectively) than those saying English is primary language used in their home (7.2 percent).

Religion

Students identifying their religion as Christianity without specifying a denomination had the lowest bias crime rate (5.9 percent; see Figure 9), followed closely by Catholic and Eastern Orthodox (6.2 and 6.8 percent, respectively). Protestants (8.6 percent) and those saying they were either Atheist, Agnostic, or having no religion (8.4 percent, collectively) had bias crime rates slightly higher than the previously mentioned religions. Students of Eastern religions such as Muslim and Hindu (23.7) had the highest victimization levels, followed by "other" religions (17.7 percent) and Judaism (16 percent). The "other" religion category includes kinds of religions (such as paganism, n=14; Quaker, n=3; Wiccan, n=18; and Christian Science, n=2), occurring too infrequently to be suitable for analysis as separate groups, but collectively yielded a group of 192 respondents.

Sexual Orientation

Students identifying their sexual orientation as either homosexual or bisexual were at greatest risk: 22.9 percent of homosexual students and 33.6 percent of bisexual students indicated bias victimization, compared to 6.8 percent of heterosexual students (Figure 10).

Disabilities

Disabled students had three times the hate victimization rates of non-disabled students (20.5 percent versus 6.9 percent; see Figure 11).

Gender

Female students' bias victimization rate (8.8 percent; see Figure 12) were somewhat higher than the rate for males (6.6 percent).

Individual Traits by Type of Bias Motivation Analysis

As we discussed above, there are limitations to only comparing different groups (i.e. comparing white to black students) concerning their rate of bias victimization. The limitation is that a certain group may not have been targeted for that particular characteristic. For example, we mentioned above that African Ameircan students are victims of bias crimes at a higher rate than are white students. While these findings are true, it is also true that not every African American bias crime victim was targeted because of racial bias. The group of African American bias crime victims could have been victimized because of some other characteristic, such as the students gender, sexual orientation or religion. In order to better understand the level of certain types of bias motivation, we examined how different groups are victimized by specific types of motivation (i.e. racially motivated or gender motivated). The following analysis displays the percentages of particular characteristics by the type of bias motivation.

Race by racially bias motivated crime.

Asians students displayed the highest rate of racially motivated bias crime victimization (15.9 percent, n=13). 'Other' (9.3 percent, n=4) and African American (8.8 percent, n=5) groups were the next most likely groups to be victims of racial bias crimes, followed by Hispanic students (5.6

percent, n=23). In comparison, white students were rarely targeted because of their race (1.0 percent, n=39).

Sexual Orientation by sexual orientation bias motivated crime.

More than a quarter of bisexual students (28 percent, n=30) and about one in five homosexual students (18.8 percent, n=9) felt that they were targeted because of their sexual orientation. In comparison, a small proportion (2.0 percent, n=85) of heterosexual students felt that they were targeted because of their sexual orientation. While it may appear that 85 students were victims because of bias against heterosexuals, many of these students were female victims of sexual harassment. In these cases the victim may have felt that the offender, usually a male, picked them for harassment because they would be open to sexual advances by males. A second explanation is that these heterosexual victims were victimized because the offender perceived the victim to be homosexual or bisexual. For example, many heterosexual students may be called derogatory homosexual names, and therefore indicated sexual orientation as the motivation for the crime.

Disability status by disability bias motivated crime

Students who indicated that they possessed some kind of disability were victims of bias crimes based on this disability at a rate of 6.7 percent. As would be expected, virtually no students who identified themselves as non-disabled were victims of this type of bias crime (0.1 percent, n=4). These non-disabled students may in fact be disabled, but incorrectly answered the question regarding. In addition, the offenders may have victimized these students because they perceived the victim to be disabled when if fact he or she was not.

Religion by religious bias motivated crime

Jewish students were far more likely than their Catholic and Protestant classmates to be victims of crimes motivated by bias against religion. While 8 percent (n=6) of Jewish students believed that their victimization was motivated by anti-Semitism, relatively very few Catholics (0.5 percent, n=14) and Protestants (1.0 percent, n=6) were victims of crimes motivated against their religions.

Gender by gender bias motivated crime

As we discussed earlier we did not include students who indicated they were victims of sexual assault because of their gender as bias crime victims and for the present analysis we followed this same rule. With this caveat in mind, 3.2 percent (n=75) of females felt they were victims of gender bias motivated crimes compared to under one percent of males (.8 percent, n=17).

To Whom Victims Report Bias Crime

In addition to estimating hate crime rates among high school students, this study was intended to examine the extent of reporting (and under-reporting) of such crimes. Students who said they had been the victims of any of the six types of crime studied were asked who they told about the most serious incident. A list of fourteen categories of individuals or institutions were provided.

The proportions of hate crime victims reporting to each category are presented in Figure 13. There is a very strong tendency for bias crime victims to tell friends (54.4 percent), family (32 percent), their boyfriend or girlfriend (23.8 percent), or nobody (28.5 percent). Relatively few told

any particular category of high school employee: 15.1 reported to a teacher, 10.2 percent told a counselor, 4.7 percent told security personnel, and 5.5 percent told other high school employees. A very small proportion of bias crime victims reported such incidents to police (4.7 percent).

To make the presentation and analysis of reporting more manageable, we have collapsed the fourteen categories into five major group with the greatest numbers and/or the most obvious policy implications: Friends, school personnel, police, family, and nobody. The original categories of high school teachers, counselors, security, and "other" employees were combined into a single "school personnel" category. The original "boyfriend," "girlfriend," and "friend" categories were combined into a "friends" category.

The percentages of bias crime victims reporting to each kind of individual or institution are presented Figure 14. The individuals to whom victims most often report are friends (69.9 percent), school personnel (33.4 percent) or family members (32 percent). The fourth most frequent type of response was not to tell anyone (28.5 percent). Very few (4.7 percent) of the bias offense victims reported the incident to police.

Type of Bias Motivation and Reporting of Bias Crime

In order to more fully understand the character of bias crime reporting (and hence, to have information facilitating the development of more effective policies and programs encouraging increased reporting), we examined reporting the relationship between reporting and the type of bias motivation perceived by victims. Figures 15 through 19 present the proportions of victims reporting to the five major categories of reporting outlets for each of the six types of bias motivation.

Reporting to Police by Bias Motivation. Figure 15 presents the percentages of bias crime

victims reporting to police who believed their incidents were targeted toward each of the kinds of personal traits related to hate crime. As can be seen here, victims who believed they were targeted for bias crime on the basis of their disability were most likely to report to police (9.5 percent), although this still indicates that a very small portion are reporting. Fewer bias victims reported to police when they believed they were targeted for their sexual orientation (7.4 percent), race (7 percent), gender (6.5 percent), religion (5.3 percent), or ethnicity (4.2 percent).

Reporting to Schools by Bias Motivation. Figure 16 presents the percentages of bias victims reporting to school personnel who believed their incidents were targeted toward each of the kinds of personal traits related to hate crime. As can be seen here, reporting to school personnel does not vary a great deal depending on the type of perceived bias motivation. Victims who believed they were targeted for bias crime on the basis of their disability were most likely to report to school employees (40 percent). The reporting rates for those believing they were targeted for their sexual orientation (38.3 percent), gender (35.2 percent) race (32.1 percent), religion (32.1 percent), or ethnicity (31.9 percent) were moderately lower.

Reporting to Families by Bias Motivation. As seen in Figure 17, there is a high level of consistency in reporting to families across different bias motivations. Bias crime victims who believed they were targeted for bias crime on the basis of their sexual orientation were most likely to report to police (39.5 percent), with slightly fewer reporting to family members when they believed they were targeted for their disability (38.1 percent), race (33.7 percent), gender (33.7 percent), ethnicity (31 percent), or religion (28.1 percent).

Reporting to Friends by Bias Motivation. There is more variation across bias motivation types in reporting to friends (figure 18). The majority (80.2 percent) of those believing that their

victimization was directed toward their gender told their friends about the incident. Relatively high levels of reporting to friends were also observed in those believing that they were targeted because of their sexual orientation (70.4 percent). Two out of three (66.7 percent) victims of bias crimes directed toward their race told their friends about the incidents, followed closely by religion (62.5 percent) and ethnicity (59.4 percent). Relatively few of the victims who believed they were selected by offenders for their disability (40 percent) told their friends.

Reporting to Nobody by Bias Motivation. Figure 19 presents the percentages of bias victims who did not tell anyone about the bias crimes they experienced, divided across each type of bias motivation. As can be seen here, victims who believed they were targeted for crime on the basis of their disability were most likely not to report to anyone (57.1 percent). Those who believe they were targeted on the basis of their ethnicity or religion had lower levels of non-reporting (43.3 and 36.8 percent, respectively). The non-reporting rates for those believing they were targeted for their sexual orientation (29.6 percent), race (29.1 percent), or gender (17.4 percent) were relatively low.

Type of Bias Crime and Reporting

In addition to examining the relationship between reporting and perceived type of bias motivation, we analyzed how the type of crime affected reporting. Figures 20 through 24 display the percentages of victims who experienced each of the six bias crime types (e.g., assault, vandalism) who reported to police, school personnel, their families, their friends, or did not report.

Reporting to Police by Bias Crime Type. As would be expected, reporting to police varied by the type of crime experienced (Figure 20). Theft and assault had the highest rapes of reporting

to police (15 and 11.3 percent, respectively), followed by assault and battery (7 percent) and sexual harassment (5.1 percent). People reported assault and harassment to the police at the lowest levels (4.1 and 4 percent, respectively).

Reporting to Schools by Bias Crime Type. There was a greater degree of consistency in reporting to school personnel across the six crime types (Figure 21). Those experiencing theft reported the incidents to school personnel at the highest rate (47.5 percent), and those experiencing sexual harassment reported at the lowest rate (30.8 percent). The other crimes were reported at rates between 34.7 and 42.9 percent.

Reporting to Families by Bias Crime Type. Victims of bias-motivated theft, assault, and vandalism told their families about the incidents at similar levels (between 43.4 and 47.5 percent; see Figure 22). Victims reported assault and battery and harassment at somewhat lower rates (34.9 and 36 percent, respectively). Students experiencing bias-motivated sexual harassment were far more reluctant to tell their families, with only 21.5 percent doing so.

Reporting to Friends by Bias Crime Type. The type of bias crime apparently has little bearing on the willingness of victims to tell their friends about such incidents. As seen in Figure 23, the rates of four of the crime types (assault, theft, sexual harassment, and harassment) were revealed to friends by between 69.9 and 76.9 percent of victims. Victims of vandalism and assault and battery told their friends at slightly lower rates (60.8 and 59.5 percent, respectively).

Reporting to Nobody by Bias Crime Type. Nearly half of the victims of bias-motivated assault decided not to tell anyone about the incident (44.9 percent; Figure 24). About one-third of the victims of sexual harassment (32.9 percent), assault and battery (32.6 percent), harassment (32.5 percent), and vandalism (30.2 percent) failed to report the incidents to anyone. Victims of

theft had the lowest rates of non-reporting (20 percent).

Individual Traits and Reporting of Bias Crimes

In addition to examining how the characteristics of bias crime incidents (the type of crime and type of perceived motivation of offenders) affect reporting, we examined the impact of individual traits of the victims on reporting. In this section of the report, we focus on just two of the reporting outlets: police and schools. Given the number of victim traits and the number of reporting outlets, a comparison of how each trait affects reporting to each reporting outlet would be impractical. While there are also policy implications regarding reporting to family and friends, schools and police are the vehicles by which either administrative or legal responses to bias offenses are carried forward, and reporting to schools and police is necessary to trigger such responses. Thus, we are focusing on these two major reporting outlets.

Given the small total number of victims who reported crime to police (n=16), it is impossible to analyze how reporting to police varies across other variables that have many categories or small numbers within categories. For example, there are eight major categories of race, and the 16 victims are not evenly distribute across the racial categories. There are either none or very few bias victims who reported to police in most of the race categories, so one cannot make valid comparisons between these groups. To address this problem, we have collapsed the individual traits that have several categories into dichotomous variables. For example, we created a race variable in which all bias victims were categorized as either white or non-white (this includes all other categories of race).

Individual Traits and Reporting Bias Crime to Police

Figures 25 through 31 present the percentages of victims of each of the major bias-relevant individual traits studied (race, nationality, first language, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender) who reported the incidents to police. Tables 32 to 38 presents the same type of analysis of reporting of bias crime to school personnel.

Reporting to Police by Race of Victim. White bias crime victims reported hate crime to police at half the rate of victims of all other racial categories combined (3.8 percent and 7.7 percent, respectively; Figure 25).

Reporting to Police by Nationality of Victim. Bias crime victims who described their nationality as other than American reported their victimization to police twice as often as those identifying their nationality as American (2.9 percent and 8 percent, respectively; Figure 26).

Reporting to Police by First Language of Victim. Just 3.4 percent of bias crime victims describing their first language as English reported their victimization to police, while 13.3 percent of those indicating any other first language reported the incidents to police (Figure 27).

Reporting to Police by Religion of Victim. Four percent of bias victims saying their religion is some form of Christianity reported these incidents to police (Figure 28). None of the non-Christian bias crime victims reported to police.

Reporting to Police by Sexual Orientation of Victim. Bias crime victims identifying their sexual orientation as bisexual and heterosexual reported the offenses at several times the rate of heterosexual bias crime victims (13.9 percent for bisexuals, 9.1 percent for homosexuals, and 3.6 percent for heterosexuals).

Reporting to Police by Disability of Victim. People with and without disabilities reported bias crime victimization at very similar rates (4.1 percent and 4.9 percent, respectively).

Reporting to Police by Gender of Victim. Male bias crime victims reported their victimization to police at about twice the rate of female victims (6.4 and 3.4 percent, respectively).

Individual Traits of Bias Crime Victims and Reporting to Schools

To facilitate comparisons of reporting to police and reporting to schools for people with different individual traits, we used the same dichotomous individual trait variables that we used in reporting to police analyses.

Reporting to Schools by Race of Victim. White and non-white bias crime victims reported hate crime to school personnel at similar rates (32 percent and 37.8 percent, respectively; Figure 32).

Reporting to Schools by Nationality of Victim. Bias crime victims who described their nationality as American versus other than American reported their victimization to school personnel at very similar rates (34.6 percent and 33.1 percent, respectively; Figure 33).

Reporting to Schools by First Language of Victim. Bias crime victims who described their first language as English their victimization to school personnel at very similar rates (33.7 percent and 32.6 percent, respectively; Figure 34).

Reporting to Schools by Religion of Victim. About one third of Christian bias crime victims reported these incidents to school personnel, while less than ten percent of victims citing other religious affiliations reported to schools (34.4 percent and 8.3 percent, respectively; Figure 35).

Reporting to Schools by Sexual Orientation of Victim. Bias crime victims identifying their

sexual orientation as bisexual and heterosexual reported bias offenses to school officials at nearly identical rates (34.4 percent for bisexuals, 33.3 percent for heterosexuals). Homosexual bias crime victims reported the incidents to schools at somewhat higher levels (45.5 percent).

Reporting to Schools by Disability of Victim. About one fourth of bias crime victims with disabilities reported the events to schools (22.9 percent) while just over one third of bias victims without disabilities reported (35.6 percent).

Reporting to Schools by Gender of Victim. Male bias crime victims reported their victimization to police at about the same rate as female victims (31.6 and 34.7 percent, respectively).

Reasons for Not Reporting Bias Crime

We identified 125 bias offenses where the victim chose not to report the incident and stated reasons for this choice (see Figure 39). The primary reasons given were that students felt the incident had little impact on them (21 percent) or that they did not consider the event to be very serious (17 percent). Others declined reporting due to fear (15 percent), the belief that there was nothing others could do about it (15 percent), or embarrassment (7 percent).

NON-BIAS CRIME, COMPARISONS TO BIAS CRIME

The focus of this study is bias crime, and given this, we do not provide a detailed analysis of other forms of victimization. However, to more fully explore the nature of bias crime and its reporting it can be informative to compare the two types of crime victims and their reporting patterns. To this end, we present selected pieces of information on non-bias crime and highlight

certain comparisons to bias crime, with an emphasis on comparing reporting patterns of the two crime types.

We found that nearly four in ten (38.0 percent, n=1,692) of the students surveyed were the victim of at least one type of offense in the six months preceding the survey. Extrapolating the number of victims in the sample to the total population of high school students at the time of the survey, we estimated that there were over 100,000 students experiencing crimes or harassment in Massachusetts' high schools in a six month time frame. Again, we note that the severity of offenses appears to vary widely, and that some of the offenses would probably not meet the standards or criminal violaitons. However, since we cannot make such determinations with the available information (and for the clarity of presentation), we use the terms "crimes," "offenses," and "victims" with the understanding that the terms cover events with a wide range of severity.

Comparison of Crime Rates Across Schools

The victimization rates of the thirty schools sampled vary considerably (Table 6). The overall victimization rates for each school ranged from a low of 24.6 percent to a high of 64.3 percent. A quarter of the schools had victimization rates higher than 44.3 percent, while a fourth had victimization rates less than 34.0 percent. As we mentioned in our discussion of school level variation in bias crime, such variation in overall crime victimization rates across schools suggests that school and community level factors such as economic conditions and school policies addressing hate crime may influence the amount of victimization within a school.

Victimization by Crime Type

Of the 1692 victims of crime identified in the survey, most were victims of harassment (46.3

percent, n=784) or larceny (39.4 percent, n=667). About one in five were victims of an assault (21.0 percent, n=355) or sexual assault/harassment (20.0 percent, n=338). Vandalism victims made up 16.9 percent (n=286) of the overall victims, while the least frequent of all offense types was assault and battery with 13.5 percent (n=229) of victims subjected to this offense. Percents do not total 100 because a victim could be the victim for more than one type of offense.

Individual Traits and Victimization

As was the case with bias crime, found that certain individual characteristics were associated with differences in victimization rates. The following is a bivariate comparison of victimization rates by student traits.

Gender. Female students (39.8 percent) have a slightly higher overall victimization rate than do male students (35.9 percent). We found an important distinction between males and females when examining the percentage of victims for each offense by gender. In fact, males are more often victims of vandalism (24.4 percent), assault and battery (20.6 percent), and assault (25.9 percent), while female victims are more likely to be victims of sexual assault/harassment (28.7 percent compared to 11.1 percent). There was no significant victimization difference between males and females for the offense types of larceny and harassment.

Race and Ethnicity. Very little variation in overall victimization rates existed between racial and ethnic groups of students. Comparing racial and ethnic minority students together with non-minority students (defined as white, non-Hispanics), minority students have similar victimization rate compared to white students (38.2 percent versus 36.6 percent). This dichotomous (minority versus non-minority) comparison is not statistically significant, however.

Native American students (62.8 percent) had the highest victimization rate, followed by white students (38.3 percent), African American (36.2 percent) and 'other' racial categories combined (33.0 percent). Asian (includes Pacific Islander) students have the lowest victimization rate (32.7 percent). It is important to note that the Native American victimization rate could be misleading due to the small number of Native Americans in the sample.

Hispanic students have a slightly lower victimization rate than do non-Hispanic students[2] (34.1 percent versus 38.4 percent). With the noted exception of Native American students, racial groups seem to experience comparable levels of overall victimization.

Religion. Overall victimization differed significantly by religious affiliation. Students who identified themselves as Hindu, Muslim or Buddhist (grouped as Eastern Religions) experienced a significantly higher percentage of victimization (55.9 percent). Agnostic, Atheist and students indicating no religion (45.5 percent), Christians (45.4 percent) and 'other' religions (45.8 percent) all experienced similar rates of victimization. More than four in ten (41.3 percent) of Jewish students reported being the victim of a crime, followed by Protestants (38.9 percent) and Catholics (35.7 percent). Eastern-Orthodox students had the lowest victimization (22.7 percent).

Sexual Orientation. Students were asked on the survey to identify what best describes their sexual orientation. We found that students who identified themselves as homosexual or bisexual have noticeably higher victimization rates. More than half of homosexuals (54.2 percent) and nearly seven in ten bisexuals (69.2 percent) were victims of a crime, compared to 36.9 percent of heterosexuals. It is not surprising, although very unfortunate, to find such a disparity in victimization among these groups. For high school students, homosexual and bisexual students are

perhaps the most socially stigmatized groups.

Disability. The survey asked students to identify if they had a disability. Students who identified themselves as being disabled were found to have much higher victimization rate than were non-disabled students. Specifically, more than half (52.3 percent) of disabled students indicated being a victim of a crime, compared to 37.0 percent of non-disabled students, a statistically significant difference. Disabilities included those students with learning disabilities (such as ADD and ADHD) as well physical disabilities. The sample of disabled students is limited however, in that we were unable to provide for special administration of the survey to more severely disabled students who may have unique victimization experiences.

Language. The survey asked students to indicate their first language and what language they speak most often in the home. Students with first languages other than English experience statistically significant lower victimization (31.0 percent) than do students with English as a first language (38.6 percent). Similarly, those students who speak Spanish (29.4 percent) or 'other' languages (36.3 percent) have significantly lower victimization rates than do students who speak English mostly in the home (38.5 percent).

Nationality. We asked students to identify what best describes their nationality. Significant differences existed in overall victimization between different groups of nationalities. Students who identified themselves as 'African' and 'other' had the highest percentage of victimization, 51.4 percent and 51.3 percent respectively. 'Multinational' (48.1 percent) students and students who described their nationality from 'United Kingdom' nations (48.1 percent) had similar victimization rates, followed by students indicating some 'European, or Eastern European'

[2] Includes all other ethnic groups.

nationality (42.7 percent). 37.3 percent of 'American' students were the victim of a crime, followed by 'Latin/Hispanic' nationality students with 32.5 percent victimization and 'Asian' students, with 31.9 percent victimization.

Non-Bias Crime Reporting, Comparisons to Bias Crime

As mentioned above in our discussion of bias crime reporting, students who said they had been the victims of any of the six types of crime studied were asked whom they told about the most serious incident. A list of fourteen categories of individuals or institutions were provided, and we collapsed these into five major categories: Reporting to police, schools, friends, families, and reporting to nobody.

In Figure 40 we present the reporting patterns of the 1388 students who were victims of non-bias crime and compare them to the reporting patterns of the 344 bias crime victims. Clearly, decisions about who victims tell is not strongly affected by their perceptions of offender motivation. Victims of both types of crime are far more likely to tell their friends about the incidents than any other person or institution (69.9 percent for bias victims, 60.6 percent for non-bias crime victims). About one-third of the victims of both crime types told school personnel (33.4 percent for bias victims, 31.1 percent for non-bias crime victims), and similar proportions told family members (32 percent for bias victims, 38 percent for non-bias crime victims). Roughly one-fourth of both types of victims told nobody (28.5 percent for bias victims, 24.4 percent for non-bias crime victims), and less than five percent reported the incidents to police (4.7 percent for bias victims, 4.4 percent for non-bias crime victims). Comparisons of bias and non-bias crime reporting for separate crime types also showed very few differences of any magnitude, and thus are not presented here.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since multiple bias crimes were found in every one of the 30 schools studied, it is essential that the Governor's Task Force on Hate Crime, the Anti-Defamation League, Massachusetts Department of Education, and others continue efforts to encourage the development of policies and procedures designed to prevent and constructively react to such offenses in all public high schools. The programs involving civil rights teams in high schools and Stop the Hate Week provide a very solid foundation on which to build additional education, prevention, and response programs.

Certain groups were found to be disproportionately the victims of bias motivated crimes. In particular, racial minorities (such as African American and Asian students), homosexual or bisexual students, disabled students and religious minorities (such as Jewish students) had the highest rates of bias motivation in comparison to other groups. Consequently, schools should provide special reporting and outreach avenues to these groups.

While surveying individuals and asking about victimization is (at this point) among the best ways to arrive at estimates of bias crime prevalence, estimates derived in this way are limited by the fact that victim perceptions of motivation must be taken at face value. Without a better understanding of what situational and individual traits prompt people to conclude that hate or bias was the motivating factor it is difficult to determine the actual extent of bias victimization in schools. Nevertheless, a large number of students in our sample - from every high school - believe that they were the victims of crimes motivated by bias against some immutable personal characteristic. Moreover, specific groups mainly those of minority status experience a disproportionate number of such crimes. As discussed above, the majority of these incidents never come to the attention of any

school or law enforcement professionals. The totality of these findings suggests that more can and should be done to reach out to these victims.

Education as a means of enhancing victim reporting

Given that most students victimized by bias or hate crimes tell only their friends or family, it is important to engage in broad based education of both parents and peers. Peers and family members must be in a position to be constructive and supportive when informed of bias victimization. It is particularly important that friends and family are able to help victims make informed decisions about how to proceed (both legally and within schools' policies), and to assist them in obtaining victim support services.

While programs such as the Governor's Task Force on Hate Crime's civil rights teams and Stop the Hate Week raise awareness and provide information to teachers, administrators, and students, neither specifically target the education of parents in responding to their children notifying them of bias victimization. Our findings suggest that parent education may be vital in effectively supporting victims.

People educated about what does and does not constitute bias crime, and who are aware of the potential seriousness of the consequences for victims, may be able to help guide victims to seek help and to report the incidents to school and/or criminal justice officials. This would not only help victim recovery, but higher reporting levels would also empower schools and the police in developing response and prevention efforts.

Educational materials should include (1) how to define and distinguish bias crimes from offenses with other motivations, (2) contact information for reporting bias crimes, (3) outlines of

criminal justice processes and school grievance procedures, and (4) contact information for sources of victim support (e.g., crisis centers, victims advocacy groups, school counseling services, etc.). Such information would enable parents and peers to help victims make informed decisions about how to proceed, both legally and procedurally within schools' policies, and about how to obtain victim support services.

Targeted Prevention to Schools

As discussed earlier, schools that have recently experienced an influx in race or ethnic minorities in recent years tend to have higher rates of racial or ethnically bias-motivated crimes. In many instances, new groups within communities or schools, as we found here, are the targets of bias motivated violence. These groups are usually the numerical minority, are culturally different than the historical majority group in a community or school, and often face language or other cultural barriers that make them easy targets for bias crime. Prevention and response resources targeted towards schools expected to or currently undergoing dramatic changes in student demographic composition may reduce the level of bias crime. Specifically, these response efforts should focus on alleviating the tensions between a historical majority group and a new minority community during times of community transition.

Future Research

There are several important research questions that should be addressed in the future that would provide information to enable policy-makers to more effectively develop and deliver services to victims of bias motivated crimes. Below, we discuss the direction research on bias crime should take as well as suggestions on how to overcome the limitations of the current study in the future.

Explaining School Bias Crime Rate Variation

While the current study was able to identify some school-level factors associated with bias crime victimization (such as demographic change, minority composition and economic indicators), a better sample of schools would more accurately determine which school characteristics are most important in explaining variation in school bias crime rates. First, the relatively small sample of schools, in this case 30, inhibited the research teams ability to fully address this question. Future studies that hope to find out about relationships between school-level characteristics, such as demographic composition, should attempt to secure more schools in the sample. Beyond having more schools included in the sample, a more schools with large minority populations that have been static for some time, and schools with large minority populations that do not also have a high proportion of economically disadvantaged students are needed in future studies to successfully address to the relationship of bias crime and school characteristics. In the present study, we were unable to definitively determine which school level factors are most important to explaining variation between school victimization rates.

Understanding Victim's Perception of Bias Motivation

One of the weaknesses of the current study is that the analysis relies on the victim's perception of the offender's motivation. For many reasons a victim may incorrectly judge the motivation for a particular incident. For example some students may incorrectly believe that their victimization was motivated by bias, when in fact it was for some other reason. At the same time some victims may not misinterpret bias motivations as non-bias motivation resulting in an underestimate of the overall bias crime rate. To better understand why some victims believe that the

crime was motivated by bias versus some other motivation, a study should be initiated, using factorial vignettes or structured interviews with student victims that would discover what facts lead victims to believe their victimization to be bias motivated. In many instances, victims will relay on different cues, such as names they were called or because the offender is of a different race, to come to a conclusion about bias. This information would be helpful in educating students about bias crime, so that they could better understand when they are victims of this type of crime and seek appropriate help.

Future Sampling Techniques

Because hate crimes are infrequent events and because minorities are disproportionately the victims of these crimes, a weakness of the current study is its inability to fully examine the character of some minority groups' victimization experience. For example, very few students of Muslim faith were captured in the sample and as such it statistically improbable that we would also find bias crime victims within this group. This problem existed for other populations within the sample as well. To overcome this problem, future victimization studies should oversample - that is purposely survey a greater proportion of certain minority groups than exists in the population - in order to insure a sufficient sample size for analysis. While the overall bias crime rate would be inflated because of this technique, the analysis would then be able reveal important information regarding the character of bias crimes against certain populations. For example, in the current study we sample 58 African American students, 11 of which were victims of bias crime. While a high percentage, having such a small number of victims inhibits our ability to assess the character of bias crime facing the African American student population (i.e. what percentage are victims of certain types of crimes

or what percentage of this group report to school officials).

Program Evaluation

The Department of Education and the Governor's Task Force should undertake a study examining the effectiveness of bias crime education and prevention programs and curricula. This study would be useful in refining the current education and prevention strategies employed in schools to more effectively provide services.

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